

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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THE SALMON SCHOOL RETURNS TO WESTERN WASHINGTON, TO OPEN AT MUSEUM OF GLASS NOVEMBER 18

After a long journey across the globe, The Salmon School returns home to reinvigorate the local conversation on conservation, environmental stewardship, and the role we all play in protecting native wildlife.



Joseph Gregory Rossano. *The Salmon School*, detail. Blown and mirrored glass. Photo by C.B. Bell. Photo courtesy of the artist and Bellevue Arts Museum, Bellevue, WA.

Wild salmon serve as the keystone species driving ecosystem function across hundreds of millions of hectares of forests and wetlands in Asia, Europe, North America, and the Arctic. And these salmon watersheds are hugely important in the drive for a net zero global carbon balance. The 18 most important salmon watersheds in the North Pacific store an estimated 6 billion tons of carbon and counting – more than three times the annual emissions of the United States. By accelerating the locally-led protection and restoration of these rivers, The Salmon School hopes to mitigate climate change and boost salmon runs that are so important to communities.

TACOMA, WA. — Museum of Glass is thrilled to announce the return of *The Salmon School* to western Washington. The exhibition, organized by artist Joseph Rossano and curated by Benedict Heywood, will open at Museum of Glass on November 18.

First conceptualized by Rossano, *The Salmon School* is an international, multimedia traveling art performance and exhibition designed to motivate communities to tackle the issues facing salmon populations, and therefore, address climate change. The installation features a life-size school of close to 600 mirrored salmon-like forms, sculpted from molten glass by concerned artists from around the world, and accompanied by first-hand video accounts from renowned scientists, artists, and indigenous peoples. These fragile forms of mirrored glass reflect not only the environment on which the fish depend, but also the viewer: both the cause of the problems confronting salmon today and the solution.

The Salmon School was created and first exhibited in 2019 at Bellevue Arts Museum. At the time, the project was a collaboration between Museum of Glass, Bellevue Arts Museum, Hilltop Artists, Schack Art Center, Trout Unlimited, Glacier Peak Institute, and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. This exhibition, informed by tribal elders from the Upper Skagit Tribe, quantified the diminished state of wild salmon and steelhead populations on the Skagit River.

In November 2021, the project was a keynote presentation at the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (UN COP26) in Glasgow, Scotland. In partnership with the Missing Salmon Alliance, other wild Atlantic salmon NGOs, and the River Clyde Foundation, eDNA workshops took place on the regenerated River Clyde, at the mouth of which Glasgow is situated. Rossano commented on the opportunity to exhibit the project in front of world leaders at the conference.

“My intention with my work has always been to make meaningful statements that combine material and location, offering a relatable context for the viewer. The idea of exhibiting 0.1% of all the wild Atlantic salmon left in the North Atlantic over the heads of 100% of the individuals who could make a difference for wild salmon and humans was a massive undertaking. Now that it has happened, another level of importance has been added to the project — along with the potential to make real change in the world,” said Rossano.

Subsequently, *The Salmon School* began to travel. In the summer of 2022, it was exhibited at Balmoral Castle, the private Scottish residence of Queen Elizabeth II. It was the first work of contemporary sculpture to be exhibited at that historic site. With the support of the Balmoral Estate and the River Dee Trust, eDNA collection took place on the River Dee. In winter 2023, with the support of the Atlantic Salmon Trust, the exhibition was displayed at The Macallan Distillery in Speyside, Scotland.

“*The Salmon School* is a world-wide art and science collaboration aiming to highlight the imminent threat to wild salmon across the Northern hemisphere. As was demonstrated by its inclusion in the United Nations COP26 conference in 2021, the threat of extinction for wild salmon is indicative of the wider impact of the climate crisis. Wild salmon need what we need: cold, clean water. It has been a privilege to so closely work with Joseph Rossano, Museum of Glass, and so many partners and concerned individuals in Europe and North America to realize this artwork and science program. A charismatic sculptural installation of living mirrors that asks the viewer to look and reflect on their own actions in the real world, *The Salmon School* is an exemplar of the concept that art can change lives,” said exhibition curator Benedict Heywood.



Joseph Gregory Rossano. *The Salmon School*, detail. Blown and mirrored glass. Photo by C.B. Bell. Photo courtesy of the artist and Bellevue Arts Museum, Bellevue, WA.

The Salmon School continues to offer perspective on the sustainability issues facing wild salmon today, as it now returns home to the Pacific Northwest to be exhibited at Museum of Glass, a founding partner on the project. Visitors will find an interactive educational experience, and one that is unique to the Museum, as the installation is composed to respond to each distinctive space it occupies.

The Museum of Glass Education Department has partnered with Foss Waterway Seaport and Tacoma Public Schools offering programming to elementary-aged students as part of the Seaport's Salmon in the Classroom Program. This program sends salmon tanks to schools, allowing students to raise and then release salmon in Swan Creek while learning about the importance of salmon within our ecosystem. Museum of Glass art educators will visit the schools with in-class lessons educating students about *The Salmon School* and Joe Rossano, as well as lead a hands-on self-reflection salmon art project that will be displayed in the Museum's Grand Hall during Tacoma's 2024 OceanFest. Museum of Glass will also host a salmon tank raising Coho Salmon, courtesy of the Foss Waterway Seaport Museum, in the Museum Education Studio from November to March.

The Salmon School will be on view at Museum of Glass until Fall 2024.

A final note from Rossano:

"I hope the show offers a glimpse of the finality of a seemingly endless natural resource — not only for people in this country, but around the globe. I want visitors to know that *The Salmon School* does not end with this exhibit at Museum of Glass. I wish for them to understand that *The Salmon School* would not have been possible without the team at MOG and the community that we all have created together — without MOG's belief in this project, the coming together of these disparate communities would not have been possible. I'd also like them to know that this project has already seen real lasting impacts — it has already helped change the law in Scotland for the benefit of wild salmon."

On November 17, from 5:30-8pm, Museum of Glass will hold an Exhibition Preview + Member Opening. This is free to attend for Museum Members and \$10 for non-members.

RSVP and learn more at museumofglass.org.

Learn more about *The Salmon School* here: museumofglass.org/salmonschool and thesalmonschool.com.

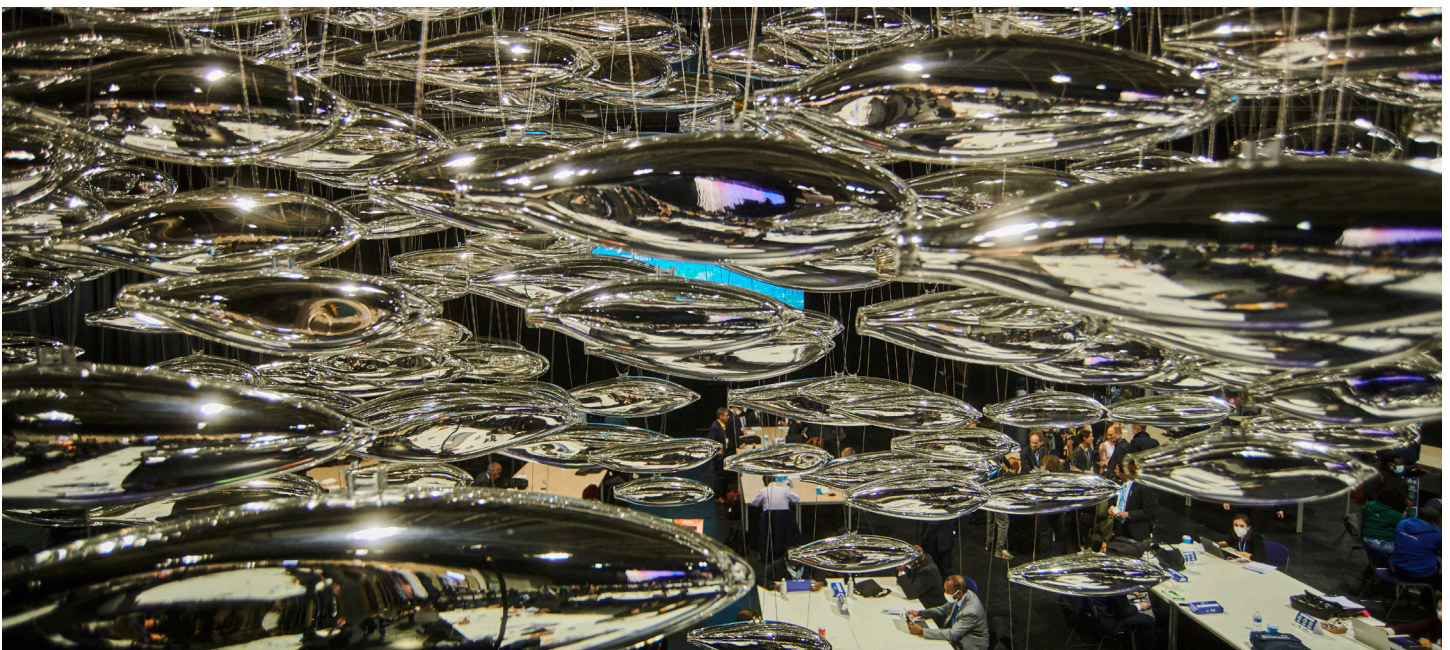
Exhibition Preview + Member Opening

Friday, November 17 | 5:30pm – 8pm

Free to attend for Museum Members / \$10 for non-members

RSVP at museumofglass.org

This celebration will feature welcome remarks from the artist and curator as well as light bites.



The Salmon School at the United Nations Climate Change Conference, COP26, Glasgow, Scotland (November 2021).

ABOUT MUSEUM OF GLASS

Located in Tacoma, Washington, Museum of Glass is a premier contemporary art museum dedicated to glass and glassmaking with the West Coast's largest and most active museum glass studio. Opened in 2002, the Museum has established a reputation for hosting impactful and engaging artist residencies, organizing nationally traveling exhibitions, and creating unique programs for visitors while building a growing permanent collection chronicling the development of modern and contemporary glass. Museum of Glass provides an environment for artists and the public to ignite creativity, fuel discovery, and enrich their lives through glass and glassmaking.

QUICK FACTS

- Museum of Glass has displayed over 140 exhibitions since 2002, featuring glass art pioneers such as Dale Chihuly, Lino Tagliapietra, and Preston Singletary.
- Over 100,000 visitors explore the Museum each year.
- The Hot Shop hosts over 35 Visiting Artist Residencies each year.
- The Museum has engaged over 200,000 children through educational programs.
- 750 soldiers and veterans have been served through the Hot Shop Heroes program. More about Hot Shop Heroes can be found [here](#).

Address: 1801 Dock Street, Tacoma, WA 98402

Hours: 10am-5pm, Wednesday - Sunday. Third Thursday of every month, 5am-8pm, free admission

Admission: \$20 - Adults; \$18 - Seniors (65+)/College Students (18+)/Military (Active and Veteran); \$12 - Children (6-18); Free - Children (under 6); Free - Museum Members; \$1/person; \$2/family - EBT Cardholders

